

Report of the Head of Economic Regeneration & Planning

To Development Management & Control Committee – 14 August 2014

Referral of Planning Application Ref: 2013/1011

From Area 2 Development Control Committee on 29th July 2014

SEION CHAPEL, PENTRE ROAD, GROVESEND, SWANSEA

**CHANGE OF USE OF CHAPEL (CLASS D1) TO RESIDENTIAL DWELLING
(CLASS C3) WITH TWO STOREY SIDE AND TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSIONS**

Purpose:	To determine the planning application for the change of use of chapel (Class D1) to residential dwelling (Class C3) with two storey side and two storey rear extensions.
Policy Framework:	National and Local Planning Policies
Reason for Decision:	Statutory responsibility of the Local Planning Authority
Consultation:	Statutory consultations in accordance with planning regulations as set out in the planning application report contained in Appendix B
Recommendation(s):	Refuse as set out in the report
Report Author:	Ryan Thomas
Finance Officer:	<i>Not applicable</i>
Legal Officer:	<i>Not applicable</i>

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This application was reported to Area 2 Development Control Committee on the 29th July 2014, with the recommendation that planning permission be refused as the proposal was tantamount to the formation of an unjustified dwelling in the countryside. Members did not accept my recommendation but resolved that the application be referred to Development, Management and Control Committee with a recommendation that it be approved on grounds that the conversion of the building would enhance the visual amenities of the area.
- 1.2 A plan showing the location of the application site is attached as Appendix A, and a copy of my report to the Area 2 Development Control Committee on the 29th July 2014 is attached as Appendix B.

2.0 Planning Policy Issues

- 2.1 A full policy appraisal is provided within the main body of my report at Appendix B.
- 2.2 With regard the acceptability, in principle, of residential development at this location, National Guidance in the form of Planning Policy Wales (July 2014) (PPW) and the provisions of Policy EV20 of the City and Country of Swansea Unitary Development Plan seek to strictly control new dwellings in the countryside unless justified in the interests of agriculture, forestry or the rural economy. No such justification has been provided in this instance.
- 2.3 Policy EC12 of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides, however, that in principle the conversion of appropriate buildings in the countryside to new uses that contribute to the local economy and the extensions of such buildings will be permitted.
- 2.4 Residential reuse provides relatively limited economic benefits and in policy terms is the least sequentially preferable re-use for a rural building. In this respect residential reuse can only be justified where it has been clearly demonstrated that the applicant has made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable business re-use and the application is supported by a statement of the efforts which have been made. In this respect UDP Policy EC12 and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled "The Conversion of Rural Buildings" requires such buildings to be genuinely marketed for sale for a range of business uses which could contribute to the local economy for a period of at least 12 months and at a price that reasonably reflects its use as a business premises.
- 2.5 In this instance the property has, it is considered, been marketed at an inflated price which more closely reflects residential values or on a "price on application basis". As a consequence in policy terms it is not considered that every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a business reuse for the premises and the proposal, therefore, constitutes an unjustified dwelling in the open countryside contrary to National Guidance, the provisions of Policies EV20 and EC12 of the City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (2008) and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled "The Conversion of Rural Buildings" adopted in July 2011.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

4.0 Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that:

- I. The application is refused for the following reason:

It has not been demonstrated that every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a business reuse for the premises and the proposal, therefore, constitutes an unjustified dwelling in the countryside contrary to the provisions of Policies EV20 and EC12 of the City and County of Swansea Unitary Development Plan (2008) and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled "The Conversion of Rural Buildings" adopted in July 2011.

- II. Should Members resolve to approve planning permission contrary to my recommendation that it be approved subject to the conditions as detailed at Appendix C.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Act 1972 (Section 100) (As Amended)

The following documents were used in the preparation of this report:
Application file, together with the files and documents referred to in the background information section of the appended Development Control committee report.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Location Plan

Appendix B – Committee Report

Contact Officer: Ryan Thomas
Date of Production: 1st August 2014

Extension No.: 5731
Document Name: Seion Chapel